

24 MILE ROAD OVERFLOW BRIDGE

HAER No. MI-84

24 Mile Road over the North Branch of
the Clinton River, approximately 0.3 mile
west of North Avenue
Chesterfield vicinity
Macomb County
Michigan

HAER
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2

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

National Park Service
Northeast Region
Philadelphia Support Office
U.S. Custom House
200 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, P.A. 19106

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HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

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Location: 24 Mile Road over the North Branch of the Clinton River, approximately 0.3 mile west of North Avenue, Chesterfield Vicinity, Macomb County, Michigan

UTM: 17.345840.4727720
Quad: Waldenburg, MI, 1:24,000

Date of Construction: 1912

Builder: Illinois Bridge Company, Chicago, IL

Present Owner: Board of County Road Commissioners of Macomb County, Administration Building, 156 Malow Street, Mount Clemens, Michigan 48046

Present Use: Not in service

Significance: This is an excellent example of a modest-sized bridge built by a small rural township to serve the transportation needs of its farmers, enabling them to move their products to market. This is one of more than a dozen reinforced concrete bridges built in Macomb County, Michigan, by the Illinois Bridge Company of Chicago. This firm erected scores of concrete bridges in Michigan in the early twentieth century.

Project Information: This documentation is the result of a Memorandum of Agreement between the Macomb County Road Commission, the State Historic Preservation Office, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation as a mitigative measure prior to the demolition of the bridge. It was completed in 1995 by Dr. Charles K. Hyde, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI 48202

HISTORY

Macomb County, located northeast of Detroit, was surveyed in 1817 and first settled by whites beginning in the early 1820s. Permanent settlements in Macomb Township date from 1831 and the township government was established in 1834. Settlers had purchased all government lands by 1837, when Macomb Township had 736 residents. By 1880, the township had a population of 2,056 and an economic base that was primarily agricultural. The lands near the intersection of North Avenue and French Road (later 24 Mile Road) were settled in the 1830s by several members of the Stroup family, including George (1777-1858) and two of his sons, Jacob and George. Jacob Stroup (1811-1884) served multiple terms as Supervisor and Clerk of Macomb Township in the 1860s and 1870s. Local residents have called this area "the Stroup Settlement" or "Stroup's Corners" over the years.¹

There is no clear evidence of a bridge carrying 24 Mile Road over the North Branch of the Clinton River in atlases and maps published in 1859, 1875, and 1895. Wagon and buggy traffic probably simply forded the river there or at some convenient location nearby. This bridge was part of a broad effort begun by Macomb Township in 1905 to improve highways and bridges within its borders. Township records show more than a dozen bridges built between 1905 and 1915. The construction program probably reflected the increased importance of the automobile, truck, and tractor to the family and working lives of the township's residents.²

The Illinois Bridge Company of Chicago built this bridge in 1912 for Macomb Township three years after building a larger two-span bridge nearby (see HAER No. MI-83). The surviving records do not explain the reason for building a second bridge west of the 1909 structure. The second bridge passes over a low-lying area which now provides overflow capacity for the North Branch of the Clinton River. Perhaps this area was not normally under water or even prone to flooding when Macomb Township built the first concrete bridge, but improved drainage throughout the watershed raised water levels and necessitated a second bridge.

HISTORY (Continued)

The township's commissioners met at Roy Stroup's house on 18 April 1912 and decided to build a concrete bridge "on French Road, near Roy Stroup's corner." They met again at Stroup's house on 2 May 1912 with a representative of the Illinois Bridge Company and voted to have the firm build two bridges, a 40-foot span (the Townline Bridge) and a 60-foot span west of "the Stroup Bridge," which they also called "the long bridge." Each bridge would be 18 feet wide and provide 16 feet of clear roadway. Illinois Bridge agreed to build both structures for a total of \$3,667.70 and proceeded with the work. The commissioners met on 7 September 1912, accepted both bridges, and agreed to pay off the builder. The Illinois Bridge Company received payments from the township in June and September, 1912, totalling exactly \$3,667.70. Because Macomb Township issued a single contract for the two bridges, the cost of each cannot be determined. Given the relative size of the two bridges, the Overflow Bridge probably cost between \$2,000 and \$2,500, about half the cost of the two-span bridge built three years earlier.³

The 24 Mile Road Overflow Bridge came under the jurisdiction of the Macomb County Road Commission sometime in the 1920s, but none of the surviving records indicate precisely when this occurred. The bridge remained in service until October, 1991, when the Road Commission permanently closed it because of severe deterioration of the deck and railings.⁴

DESCRIPTION

The 24 Mile Road Overflow Bridge is an earth-filled reinforced concrete arch bridge, consisting of a single arch span and reinforced concrete abutments. It measures 62 feet long, 18 feet wide, and provides a clear roadway of 16 feet.

The concrete railings are 2 feet 6 inches high and 6 inches thick. The south railing is badly spalled and crumbling over much of the length of the bridge, but the north railing is reasonably intact. Several panels are clearly not original and were probably built sometime in the 1940s or 1950s to replace deteriorated panels.

Each railing consists of six panels measuring 11 feet in length. The railing panels at the ends of the bridge are entirely plain, with detailing. However, to break up the monotony of the long railing and to provide some decorative detail, the four remaining railing panels contain a pair of smaller rectangular panels, each 4 feet 4 inches long, 1 foot high, and centered vertically and horizontally within the larger panel. The smaller panels are set off from the surrounding concrete by a 2 inch wide bevelled edge. The same design is found on the inside and outside faces of the railings.

NOTES

¹Robert F. Eldredge, Past and Present of Macomb County (Chicago: S.J. Clarke, 1905), pp. 654-656 and History of Macomb County, Michigan (Chicago: M. A. Leeson & Company, 1882), pp. 471-, 767-770, 775-776.

²Commonwealth Cultural Resources Group, Inc., "Cultural Resources Survey for the Twenty-Four Mile Road Bridge and Overflow Bridge Over the North Branch of the Clinton River Replacement Project," (Jackson, Michigan: 1994), p. 19.

³Macomb Township, Record of Commissioners' Meetings, 1901-1951, meetings of 18 April, 2 May, and 7 September 1912; Macomb Township, Clerk's Account Book, 1909-1913, payments of \$2,200.00 on 16 June 1912 and \$1,467.70 on 14 September 1912 to the Illinois Bridge Company.

⁴Macomb County Road Commission, Traffic Control Order, 15 October 1991.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Engineering Drawings: A thorough search of the records of Macomb Township and the Macomb County Road Commission has uncovered no surviving drawings.
- B. Historic Views: None have been found.
- C. Bibliography
1. Primary and Unpublished Sources:
 - Macomb County Board of County Supervisors, Supervisors' Records, March 1912 - December 1923. These include the first ten annual reports issued by the Macomb County Board of County Road Commissioners, October 1912 - October 1921. The records are in storage at the Macomb County Service Center, 21855 Dunham Road, Mt. Clemens, Michigan 48046.
 - Macomb County Board of County Road Commissioners, Minute Records, May 1912 - May 1948. Held in the Administration Building of the Board of County Road Commissioners of Macomb County, 156 Mallow Street, Mount Clemens, Michigan 48046.
 - Macomb Township, Clerk's Account Book, 1909-1913. Macomb Township Office, 19925 Twenty-Three Mile Road, Macomb, Michigan 48042.
 - Macomb Township, Minutes of Commissioners' Meetings, 1865-1908. Macomb Township Office, 19925 Twenty-Three Mile Road, Macomb, Michigan 48042.
 - Macomb Township, Record of Commissioners' Meetings, 1901-1951. Macomb Township Office, 19925 Twenty-Three Mile Road, Macomb, Michigan 48042.
 - Macomb Township, Treasurer's Record Book, 1902-1909. Macomb Township Office, 19925 Twenty-Three Mile Road, Macomb, Michigan 48042.

C. BIBLIOGRAPHY (continued)

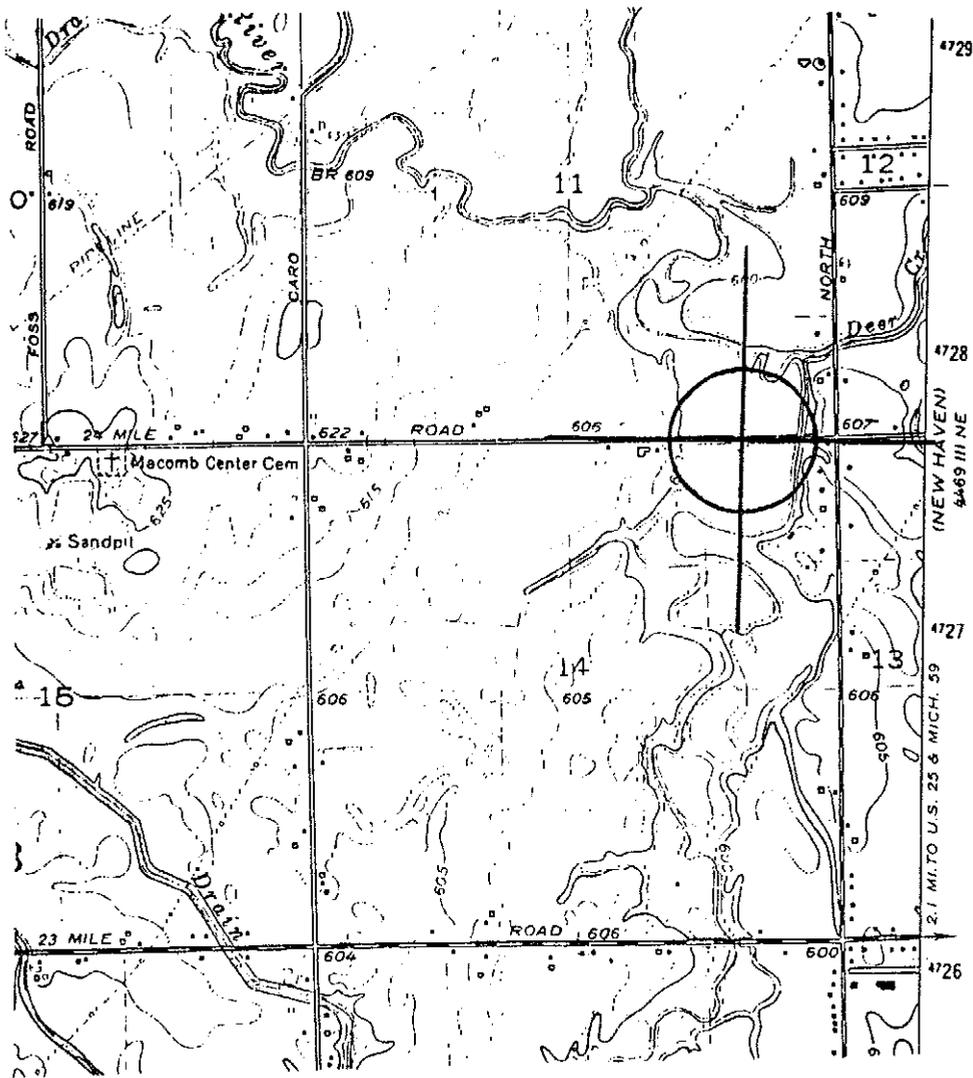
2. Secondary and Published Sources:

- Commonwealth Cultural Resources Group, Inc.
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WALDENBURG, MICHIGAN QUADRANGLE, 1:24,000

UTM: 17.345840.4727720



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HAER No. MI-84 (page 9)

GENERAL SITE PLAN

